

submitting a question(s) does not have to be present for the question(s) to be answered. A consolidated list of the questions submitted by May 29, 1998, and the issues to be discussed, will be posted on NHTSA's web site ([www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov)) by June 11, 1998, and will be available at the meeting. The next NHTSA vehicle regulatory program meeting will take place on Thursday, September 17, 1998 at the Tysons Westpark Hotel, 8401 Westpark Drive, McLean, VA.

**ADDRESSES:** Questions for the June 16, NHTSA Technical Industry Meeting, relating to the agency's vehicle regulatory program, should be submitted to Delia Lopez, NPS-01, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Room 5401, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590, Fax Number 202-366-4329, e-mail [dlopez@nhtsa.dot.gov](mailto:dlopez@nhtsa.dot.gov). The meeting will be held at the Clarion Inn Hotel, 9191 Wickham Road, in Romulus, MI.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Delia Lopez, (202) 366-1810.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** NHTSA holds a regular, quarterly meeting to answer questions from the public and the regulated industries regarding the agency's vehicle regulatory program. Questions on aspects of the agency's research and development activities that related directly to ongoing regulatory actions should be submitted, as in the past, to the agency's Safety Performance Standards Office. The purpose of this meeting is to focus on those phases of NHTSA activities which are technical, interpretative or procedural in nature. Transcripts of these meetings will be available for public inspection in the DOT Docket in Washington, DC, within four weeks after the meeting. Copies of the transcript will then be available at ten cents a page, (length has varied from 100 to 150 pages) upon request to DOT Docket, Room PL-401, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. The DOT Docket is open to the public from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Questions to be answered at the quarterly meeting should be organized by categories to help us process the questions into an agenda form more efficiently. Sample format:

**I. RULEMAKING.**

- A. Crash avoidance
- B. Crashworthiness
- C. Other Rulemakings

**II. CONSUMER INFORMATION**

**III. MISCELLANEOUS**

NHTSA will provide auxiliary aids to participants as necessary. Any person desiring assistance of "auxiliary aids" (e.g., sign-language interpreter, telecommunications devices for deaf

persons (TDDs), readers, taped texts, brailled materials, or large print materials and/or a magnifying device), please contact Delia Lopez on (202) 366-1810, by COB June 11, 1998.

Issued: April 17, 1998.

**L. Robert Shelton,**

*Associate Administrator for Safety Performance Standards.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Research and Special Programs Administration

[Docket No. RSPA-98-3638; Notice 1]

#### Pipeline Safety: Liquefied Natural Gas Facilities Petition for Waiver; Exxon Company, USA

Exxon Corporation has petitioned the Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA) for a waiver from compliance with certain provisions of 49 CFR part 193 for its proposed Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) storage tanks at its existing LaBarge, Wyoming, gas processing operation. The existing operation includes two parallel Nitrogen Rejection Units and a small liquefied natural gas (LNG) truck loading facility. Exxon is proposing to install two used 55,000 gallon LNG storage tanks (vessel nos. 5477 and 5516). According to Exxon, these tanks were in LNG service for 19 years without problems. The tanks were designed, built, tested, and registered in accordance with the requirements of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code, Section VIII, Division 1.

Exxon states that as a part of the post fabrication procedures of the ASME Code, the longitudinal and circumferential butt welds of vessel number 5477 were spot checked by radiographic methods. The longitudinal and circumferential butt welds of vessel number 5516 were 100 percent radiographically tested at the time of manufacture. The ASME Code does not apply to any piping beyond the first weld.

Exxon requests a waiver from compliance with certain sections of Part 193 and proposes to ensure equivalent safety through compliance with the National Fire Protection Association (NAPA) Standard 59A. The specific sections of Part 193 for which Exxon seeks a waiver are:

(1) § 193.2321 (a)—*Nondestructive tests*. This section requires that 100 percent of circumferential butt welded

pipe joints in cryogenic piping and 30 percent of circumferential butt welded pipe joints in the non-cryogenic piping be nondestructively tested.

Exxon is requesting a waiver for vessels 5477 and 5516 of the requirements of § 193.2321 (a)—Nondestructive tests, based on the following:

- Calculated value of the pressure induced hoop stresses for the inner vessel nozzles and interconnecting piping are less than the 20 percent of the specified minimum yield stress (SMYS) for the piping material which is recognized as acceptable under NAPA 59A. To support this allegation Exxon has submitted stress calculations.
- NAPA 59A—Standard of the Production, Storage and Handling of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), section 6-6—Inspection and Testing of Pipe, Paragraph 6-6.3.2, requires all circumferential butt welds to be nondestructively tested, except that liquid drain and vapor vent piping with an operating pressure that produces a hoop stress of less than 20 percent of SMYS need not be nondestructively tested, provided it has been inspected visually in accordance with the ASME standard B31.3—Chemical Plant and Petroleum Refinery, section 344.2.

RSPA believes that safety will not be compromised by waiving the requirements of § 193.2321(a) for non-cryogenic piping with operating pressures that produce hoop stresses of less than 20 percent SMYS, if that piping complies with standard NAPA 59A, Section 6-6.3.2. Therefore, RSPA is proposing to grant the waiver from § 193.2321(a).

(2) § 193.2321 (e)—*Nondestructive tests*. This section requires 100 percent nondestructive tests of both longitudinal and circumferential butt welds in metal shells of storage tanks that are subject to cryogenic temperatures and are under pressure to be radiographically tested.

Exxon requests a waiver of the requirements of § 193.2321 (e)—Nondestructive tests, for vessel number 5477 based on the following reasons:

- The tank was designed, manufactured, tested and registered to the requirements of the ASME Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code. Section VIII Division 1 of the ASME Code is an accepted standard to which cryogenic pressure vessels are built throughout the world.

• Safety in this case is not compromised because the storage tank at the Exxon facility is small, less than 70,000 gallons, shop fabricated and built to the ASME Code.

• Public safety is not the issue because the facility is very remote.

- The use of a weld joint efficiency factor of 85 percent and spot radiographic testing result in an inner vessel of thicker material than one built with a weld joint efficiency factor of 100 percent and 100 percent radiograph testing, substantially reducing the stress in the welds.

- The tank meets NAPA 59A requirements under Section 4-2, Metal Containers, paragraph 4-2.2.2., which states that the inner tank must be welded construction in accordance with the ASME Code, Section VIII, and must be ASME-stamped and registered with the National Board of Boiler and Pressure Vessels Inspectors (NBBI) or other agency that registers pressure vessels.

RSPA agrees that safety will not be compromised by waiving the requirements of § 193.2321(e) for smaller pressure vessels (less than 70,000 gallons) that are designed and built to the ASME Code, Section VIII (greater than 15 psig). Tanks built to this code are shop-fabricated under strict quality control and are inspected and stamped by Authorized Inspectors of the NBBI. Storage tanks at the Exxon LaBarge gas processing facility are built to ASME Code, Section VIII, and have a capacity of 55,000 gallons (relatively small). Therefore, RSPA is proposing to grant the waiver from § 193.2321(e).

(3) § 193.2329(a)—*Construction Records*. This section requires that an operator shall retain records of specifications, procedures and drawings consistent with this part, and section 193.2329(b) requires that an operator must retain records of results of tests, inspections and quality assurance programs required by this subpart.

Exxon states that the ASME-stamped nameplates and the ASME U-1 form constitute adequate records for vessel construction. However, Exxon requests a waiver of the requirements of Section 193.2329 because the vessels were built to the ASME Code as referenced in NAPA 59A. The operator further agrees to comply with the recordkeeping requirements in accordance with Sections 193.2329 (a) and (b).

RSPA agrees and proposes to grant a waiver from sections 193.2329 (a) and (b) for selected parts of the Exxon facility.

Except for the sections for which RSPA is proposing to grant a waiver, this LNG facility must meet all the requirements of Part 193. RSPA believes that the granting a waiver would not be inconsistent with pipeline safety, as long as Exxon follows the alternative provisions in the NAPA 59A.

Interested parties are invited to comment on the proposed waiver by

submitting in duplicate such data, views, or arguments as they may desire. Comments should identify the Docket and Notice number (Docket no. RSPA-98-3638; Notice 1), and should be addressed to the Docket Facility, U.S. Department of Transportation, Plaza 401, 400 Seventh Street SW., Washington, DC 20590-0001. Alternatively, comments may be submitted via e-mail to "ops.comments@rspa.dot.gov".

All comments received before May 22, 1998 will be considered before final action is taken. Late filed comments will be considered so far as practicable. No public hearing is contemplated, but one may be held at a time and place set in a notice in the **Federal Register** if requested by an interested person desiring to comment at a public hearing and raising a genuine issue. All comments and other docketed material will be available for inspection and copying in room Plaza 401 between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except federal holidays.

**Authority:** 49 App. U.S.C. 2002(h) and 2015; and 49 CFR 1.53.

Issued in Washington, D.C. on April 16, 1998.

**Richard B. Felder,**

*Associate Administrator for Pipeline Safety.*  
[FR Doc. 98-10673 Filed 4-21-98; 8:45 am]  
BILLING CODE 4910-60-P

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 33584]

#### Union Pacific Railroad Company— Trackage Rights Exemption—The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company

The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company (BNSF) has agreed to grant overhead trackage rights to Union Pacific Railroad Company (UP) from Beaumont, TX, at or near milepost 0.07 to Silsbee, TX, at or near milepost 152.16, continuing through Cleveland, TX, at or near milepost 94.9 and Conroe, TX, at or near milepost 72.1, to Navasota, TX, at or near milepost 28.14, a distance of 144.32 miles. Further, BNSF has agreed that UP may enter or exit the trackage rights line at Cleveland and at Conroe.

The transaction is expected to be consummated on or shortly after April 13, 1998, the effective date of the exemption.

As a condition to this exemption, any employees affected by the trackage rights will be protected by the

conditions imposed in *Norfolk and Western Ry. Co.—Trackage Rights—BN*, 354 I.C.C. 605 (1978), as modified in *Mendocino Coast Ry., Inc.—Lease and Operate*, 360 I.C.C. 653 (1980).

This notice is filed under 49 CFR 1180.2(d)(7). If the notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void *ab initio*. Petitions to revoke the exemption under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) may be filed at any time. The filing of a petition to revoke will not automatically stay the transaction.

An original and 10 copies of all pleadings, referring to STB Finance Docket No. 33584, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on Joseph D. Anthofer, General Attorney, 1416 Dodge Street, #830, Omaha, NE 68179.

Decided: April 13, 1998.

By the Board, David M. Konschnik,  
Director, Office of Proceedings.

**Vernon A. Williams,**

*Secretary.*

[FR Doc. 98-10527 Filed 4-21-98; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. AB-531X]

#### Pioneer Valley Railroad Company, Inc.—Abandonment Exemption—In Hampden County, MA

On April 2, 1998, Pioneer Valley Railroad Company, Inc., filed with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) a petition under 49 U.S.C. 10502 for exemption from the provisions of 49 U.S.C. 10903 to abandon a line of railroad known as the Westfield Branch extending from milepost 0.0 to the end of the line at milepost 1.9, a total distance of 1.9 miles, in Westfield, Hampden County, MA. The line traverses U.S. Postal Service ZIP Code 01085. There are no stations on the line.

The line does not contain federally granted rights-of-way. Any documentation in the railroad's possession will be made available promptly to those requesting it.

The interest of railroad employees will be protected by the conditions specified in *Oregon Short Line R. Co.—Abandonment—Goshen*, 360 I.C.C. 91 (1979).

By issuance of this notice, the Board is instituting an exemption proceeding pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 10502(b). A final decision will be issued by July 21, 1998.